THE BRAVO'S SON.

VOLUME II.

THE

BRAVO's SON.

CHAPTER I.

"I will not harm thee
In the school of pain, mercy I've learnt
Nor have I learnt in vain."

MISS M. A. PORTER.

IN about a week the fever left Randolph, but still the dreadful malady continued on him; he, with the cunning natural among people in his frame

of mind, sought an opportunity to escape, which at dusk one evening he effected; he first visited the ruins of the Recorder's dwelling, and fixing the ladder to the window from which he had taken Julia, again rehearsed the scene of horrors of that dreadful night; then, with solemn step, he paced his way to the hotel, and scaled the wall belonging to the grounds; his intention was to visit the grotto, but a light in a small confessionary, which stood on the lawn, attracted his notice, and thither he hastened; he saw through the windows several domestics ranged

on each side an altar, at the foot of which stood his friends Henry and Julia. The marriage ceremony had nearly finished; he entered the porch, and met them as they were preparing to return; he flew to Julia, and clinging to her knees, kissed the hem of her robe: a piercing shriek from her, followed by an exclamation from the whole, at recognizing the unfortunate maniac, seemed to awaken him; and starting up, he linked his arm through that of the fainting bride, and hurrying her along he kissed her hand, and whispered:

"Julia, they would fain persuade me thou lovest me no more, but I knew they lied: the robber, Hugo's son, will love and cherish thee as fondly as ever mother did her son; I'll nurse thee as the lambs are nursed; no harm shall come to thee, Julia."

She had sunk into the arms of her husband, whose condition was little better than her own. Randolph saw them preparing to seize him, and bounding past them had reached the grotto, and left his pursuers far behind; he again scaled the wall, quitted the

city, and before morning's dawn he was some leagues from it.

At day-light he reached the forest of St. Floriden, at the extremity of which, close by the sea, dwelt, for many a year, an hermit; a cave, formed from the hollow of the rock, partly by nature, and partly by the weak efforts of his feeble arm, was his habitation; his food, the fruits of the forest; his drink, was of the purling stream that meandered through a wood of firs, which formed part of the forest of Saint Floriden.

To this cave of peace and harmony

had destiny guided the miserable steps of the maniac; and when he entered it, the good old man administered to his comforts; he washed his feet, and bathed his fevered forehead, then let him sleep, from which he awoke refreshed in body, but the same in mind.

Henry, in grief, conveyed Julia to the hotel; but to what sorrow was their joy turned, in one moment, from the pinnacle of happiness to the gulph of despair; a skilful leach attended the invalid, but informed the distracted husband and parent she would never

again rise from her couch; and, in fact it was so, for in a short time her life was returned to him that gave it; and the last word that trembled on her lips was that of Randolph.

Gortz used his utmost endeavours to console the young widower, whose melancholy daily encreased; and he determiend, when the burial of his wife should take place, he would seek his friend, and end his days in solitary sadness with him.

"Gortz," said he, one day, "methinks when man is struggling against a flood of difficulties it is little harm

to plunge into the stream, and end at once the current of our woes."

"For shame, Henry," said Gortz, "do you think a man who wantonly throws away the life his maker entrusts him with, is a fit inhabitant of heaven; do you think, instead of raising his eye in gratitude to the Creator of all, he will stand abashed before him, expecting to hear the dreadful sentence of everlasting misery sounded in his ears: no, Henry, it is sin to harbour such a thought, and the heart that breeds it will, in time, grow familiar to the greatest vice."

"Thou art right, Gortz, I feel thou art; heaven, in mercy, will pardon the murmurs of one of its faintest worshippers, for where is the man that is proof against the shafts of adversity; where is the man who, as he feels them strike his soul, his only happiness, will not repine, and be half-tempted to question the authority from whence they are thrown. Alas, poor Randolph! thou feelest enough; but does not feel what Henry feels."

A few days brought the good old baron to the Recorder's; the meeting between them was truly affecting; the

idea of losing both his children (as he called the friends) had made him hasten to dry the cheek of Henry: they discoursed of Julia and of Randolph, and many a tear was shed to the memory of each, for they conceived that Randolph, ere this, must have killed himself in the heat of his disorder.

Hugh de Seymour had come, as well to invite the sorrowing Francisco to his castle, as to take back his heart-broken son, and who agreed to make the castle his future home, retire from the affairs of state, and seek for peace away from ungrateful man, who envies

every look and every turn that is at all to the advantage of his fellow creature.

Francisco being a man universally esteemed as well for his private virtues as his public abilities, in consequence a great number attended the bier of Julia, preceding which was Gortz; next followed, weeping, with unfeigned sorrow, the forlorn Henry; next to him, the two fathers', Francisco and Hugh; who were followed by a number of the nobility of the city; six maidens, in white, bore the pall; the bells throughout the whole city, minutely tolled;

and in the midst of the solemn stillness that reigned, the body of the late blooming Julia was committed to its habitation of clay.

CHAPTER XII.

Ere the bat hath flown
His cloyster'd flight, ere back to Hecate's summons
The shard-born beetle, with his drowsy hum,
Hath rung night's yawning peal, there shall be done
A deed of dreadful note.

ONE night, as the bravo and his comrade were regaling themselves with a cup of the jews wine, (Paul being absent) a thrilling silence reigned without, nothing was heard save the faint

strain of some love-sick youth, serenading his mistress; and now and then the distant toll of a convent bell, which seemed to lose itself, at intervals, in distance.

"Rhodarno," said Hugo, "I do not like this Israelite, he is a villain."

"Why for the matter of that," answered his comrade, "birds of a feather will flock together."

"We had better cut with the old rogue," rejoined the captain, "and I think there can be no better time than the present; he has a pretty heavy purse, I take it."

"*Aye, you will take it.*"

"Nay, nay jesting apart; Paul is a man capable of committing any act, that will, in any way, tend to his own advantage: I have not the least hesitation in saying he would sacrifice his dearest friend for a few ducats."

"There I believe you."

"Have you not observed, when any scheme has been started where certain gain has pointed out the road, how his lank countenance cheers up at the thought; perhaps, at this instant, he is working our ruin, for never is he so long absent, as he has been to night;

I have long had it in thought; he grows old and can be of little service to us: why then should we trust our property and lives upon so uncertain a risk? That property which cost us many a good brave fellow, many a drop of blood has been the price at which our daring purchases were made."

"Aye! aye! dispatch old bundle of sin, one foot is already in the grave, and our daggers shall save his future board and lodging. But what shall we do with the old rogue?"

"Leave him and fly certainly, he

has no domestic, you know, and few visitors. We will change our present disguises; hark! there are footsteps —'tis he—there's the signal, admit him."

The accustomed knock proclaimed the approach of the unfortunate Jew, and he entered.

"Paul," said Hugo, sternly, "you are late; the hour is unusual for you."

"Yes, captain, I have been to one of my brethren, who wants to borrow of me."

"To one of your brethren have

you?" questioned the bravo, with a sneer.

"Yes, by my life, I have been to Moses Salek."

"Don't swear by *your life*, for *that* is *worth little*."

"What do you mean?" replied the trembling culprit, "what do you mean?"

"Paul," said Hugo, seizing his feeble wrist, "you well know I am no babe, you know too, I am not to be tampered with; have you not been to the duke's? — Have you not betrayed one who has, for

many a year, been your only support?"

"Bless me," said the jew, rising, "how I've been frightened, and all for nothing at all: I'm ready to swear, I've only been to shake my old friend, Salek, by the hand."

"Come! come, I'm not to be trifled with," said Hugo, drawing his dirk, which example Rhodarno instantly followed, "the world has long, too long, been burthened with such an old hypocrite: speak! confess! while you have life to do it."

The Jew sank at their feet inanimate

—his sunken eye fixed on the darkened countenance of the merciless robber, who still held him firmly by the wrist; at last he recovered, and clasping his arms around the monster's knees, he spoke—

" Oh, Hugo! do not take the life of one whose latter days have been worn out in anxious cares for your welfare; do not shorten the thread of an existence in which I own I have not played the man, yet I am innocent of what you now accuse me, as I hope for mercy: take the baubles I have all my life been scraping together; take me

with you to your cave if you are fearful I shall betray a trust I have ever kept sacred, but spare, oh spare my life, and the remnant of my days shall be spent in prayers for your welfare."

Tears of anguish dimmed the eyes of the Jew as he watched with eagerness the look of the Bravo.

"Well, give me your keys; we shall take from you what in justice we think our own, and leave you to enjoy the life you beg so earnestly for. Are these your keys?"

He could not answer, his darling gold was on the point of being torn

from him, and that was his second life —the only god he knew or worshipped.

"Often have you," said Hugo, "under the mask of friendship, ruined a fellow-creature without a throb of anguish or remorse, and yet you think yourself so very far before us on the list of honesty, while we have nobly riked our lives upon our daggers point, and hardly earned the riches we have got. Where is your repository?"

"Slip back yon coloured pannel, behind which you will find my all."

"Are you sure on't?"

" Aye, too sure!

A look of meaning from Hugo to his comrade gave the dreaded order, and he plunged his dirk into the heart of the Israelite, who from his knees sank breathless on the floor, and round him flowed the crimson flood of life.

They took whatever valuables they found, and prepared to leave the house that had sheltered them from their enemies; and having extinguished the lamp, they groped their way through the low-roofed passage to the door, but 'ere they reached it they were startled

by a loud knocking at the gate—awhile they paused—

"Who is there?" enquired Hugo.

"I want the Jew" was the reply.

"He has retired to rest; you cannot see him before the morn."

"Such is my business, I must not return without him."

They hesitated what answer to give; still and solemn was the silence that reigned—a faint groan fom the Jew made Rhodarne again unsheath his dirk, and he spoke in a whisper:

"Let us open the door, and make this fool his companion on his journey;

he may overtake the Israelite, as his spirit will perhaps trot faster than Paul's."

He returned to the Jew, and plunging his dirk into the lifeless body, again rejoined the Bravo."

The knocking encreased.

"You may knock there as loud and as long as you please, and as sure as heaven made apples you will soon have the officers at your tail."

"Do, for heaven's sake, awake him," replied the voice without.

"He is already awake, and says he is too ill to attend you."

They heard, with pleasure, the departing footsteps of the intruder. Hugo already had his hand upon the latch; Rhodarno touched the skirt of the friar's robe he wore.

"We have not changed our disguise," he exclaimed, "that must be done and speedily."

They knew where the disguises were kept, and having rekindled the lamp by the remaining spark of fire which dimly burnt in the hearth's corner, they soon equipped themselves.

"There is," said Hugo, "an old rusty dagger in the landing-place lead-

ing to Paul's chamber, we will give him the weapon to hold, or suspicion may perhaps rest on us; for through want of caution we both answered the person who came to visit him, and it is well known he kept no company.

"A good thought," said his fellow, fetching it, "zounds, his fist is so stiff I can't make the old ——; never mind we'll leave it in him and begone."

They with caution opened the door and sallied forth; they made their way toward the great square, passed the ruins of the Recorder's house; and although time never was more valuable

to any than to the Bravo's, at this moment, they for awhile forgot their situation, as they contemplated the destruction they had occasioned so great an enemy; they proceeded in silence.

"Soft," said Hugo, listening, "I hear a noise," and on looking up observed the battlements that guard the city gates.

"The sentinel's heavy tread proclaim their vigilance; we must creep under the shade of yon high wall," said Rhodarno, "or the watch will observe us."

They kept their places until the

guard had turned to mark his distance back, before they again ventured forward. Hugo, went a few paces before in order to reconnoitre, and he returned to inform his comrade the gates were closed; again they paused, and fear became an inhabitant of their lion-hearts.

"What can be done," said Rhodarno, "we are now without hope."

"Can it be Rodarno, the Bravo, who has just now spoken," retorted Hugo; "has he forgot the wicket at which only one centinel is posted."

His comrade revived; they spoke no

more; this was their only means of escape, therefore having drawn their dirks, they entered the defile, at the top of which a burning light shone full on the warden; he was leaning on his spear, and evidently asleep.

"Now, Rodarno," said Hugo in a whisper, "be firm, we must not be noisy or we are lost."

They advanced, and at the same instant the dagger of each struck their victim, and he fell without a groan; passing from the sleep of nature into that of death.

CHAPTER XIII.

Amidst the woods the leopard knows his kind;
The tyger preys not on the tyger brood:
Man only is the common foe of man.

THE residence of Paul Aslek had long been the outlaw's haunt, whenever business called them to the city; and the continual fear of discovery in which he lived, made him anxious to rid himself of them; his determination had long been fixed, the Bravo was

then in his house, and he left it under a pretence of visiting one of his brethren; but, in truth, to give information to the officers of justice.

It was the dusk of evening when he arrived at the gate of the Recorder; he trembled ere he touched the bell-string; a domestic attended the gentle summons.

"O, is it you, Paul?" he exclaimed, "we do not want to buy any of your trinkets; our master is within, and I have no time to waste with you."

'Tis your master I vaunt," returned

Paul; "I have concerns vid him vat he vill be clad to hear."

"To-morrow will be in time may-hap, I cannot disturb him at this instant."

"Vell, vell, I can vait, my friend—I can vait; there is a piece of silver for you, let me remain within until I can communicate my business; for I must not be seen about the door by any of my brethren."

The kindness of the domestic was now equal to his former harshness: such was the magic effect of the silver piece.

He gave his message to the servant, which soon brought the Recorder to the apartment.

"My lord," said the Jew as he entered, "I would vait your leisure —."

"Nay, there is no necessity for that, speak what is your business.'

"I must beg your highness's patient hearing to vat I have to say: My lord, I am a man vat has laboured my whole life to gather a little money, in an honest way, to support me in my old age, ven my strength shall forsake me. I have lived in strict obedience to the laws of the country that has

supported me: I have never offended against them vilfully, but misfortune has been my companion from infancy; I was born in misery, and that has ever been my portion."

"Well, my good friend, can I serve you in any way?"

"My lord, I am afraid you vill hear my testimony vid caution; I am afraid you vill not believe vat I am about to disclose; you vill perhaps tink, vid the peoples, that I am a villain because I am a Jew, but ———."

"Nay," exclaimed the benevolent man, "proceed I pray you."

"I thank your highness; vid tears I thank you. The state has long been anxious to rid itself of one that has sorely troubled it. The man who gives information of the offender vill be entitled to a reward: but first, my lord, I have been drawn into a snare, and unknowingly have been the protector of the outlaw Hugo."

The name made the Recorder start; the Jew trembled; his agitated look fully bespoke the troubles of his mind.

"Your pardon is secure," Francisco observed, "proceed with your relation.

himself; the grand object of his wishes was now *the reward*; and he smiled as he folded up the parchment, and said:—

"The next thing your lordship vill be required to do is to pay me the one thousand crowns, promised to the man who gives information of the robber."

"But where is he?"

Content yourself, my lord, until I receive the money."

"It is impossible, you cannot receive it until the outlaw is in the custody of the officers."

"Aye, is it so, my lord; surely Paul

"My lord," returned the crafty Jew, "I cannot, must not proceed further: my own life is too nearly connected with the Bravo's concerns."

"I will, this instant, give directions for your pardon being made out: your name?"

"Paul Aslek, an' please you."

A short time was required for the completion of the Recorder's orders, and the secretary entered with the instrument.

The instant the Jew read it, and found it secure, his fears forsoook him, his trembling ceased, he was again

could not have mistaken the proclamation."

He drew a printed paper from his breast and read, 'for the apprehension of whom a reward of 1000 crowns shall be paid to the informant.'

"Now, my lord, am I not right. Let your soldiers be at my door as Saint Agnes' bell tolls twelve; *I vill then give up your victim, or my life shall be the forfeit.* The city gates are now closed, and it is impossible for me to escape if I were inclined to impose on you. My lord, the money?"

The knowledge of the present resi-

dence of so great a foe, was not to be relinquished, the money demanded was paid, and the jew left the mansion, to proceed to his own.

He called at the house of a friend, with whom he deposited his ill-gotten wealth, and then returned home; the reader has already witnessed the scene which passed on his arrival.

True as the bell chimed, from Saint Agnes's turret, the officer, who commanded the guard, gave the signal, previously agreed on, at the door of the jew; no answer was returned, it was repeated, still no answer, he waited a

few moments, then again rapped; while thus they deliberated the young man drew near (whom the robbers had answered from within) to request the immediate attendance of the jew to his father, who was on his death bed; the guard retreated; he knocked, but no answer was made, the officer then gave directions for his seizure, he informed them his business, and mentioned the circumstance of two voices answering him from within, neither of whom he was confident were the voice of the jew.

The guards were in possession of a

dark lantern, they examined the door, and, to their surprise, found it open, their rapiers were unsheathed, and the captain with four others entered.

"Here has been murder," exclaimed the soldier, bearing the lantern, "this scarf is smeared with blood, and here are two dresses, the villains have disguised themselves."

The inner room they next entered, in which lay the body of the unfortunate jew, who could not have been recognised but from his dress; his head hanging down, the blood flowed

from under his vest upon his pale face, and nearly covered it, while his half open mouth, and snow white beard likewise stained with gore, made him look doubly ghastly.

The house was searched, the robbers could not be found, the city was alarmed, the outpost secured, but it was too late; they found the lifeless sentinel, at the outer gate, his stiffened hand pressing hard against his wounded side.

CHAPTER XIV.

Neither man nor angel can discern
Hypocrisy, the only evil that walks
invisible.

MILTON.

IN the black towers of St. Narvo, dwelt the proud lord Rogoldo, a man to whom no particle of virtue belonged, for though the state were much his debtors, for services performed, yet they eyed him with a lynx's care, for they

knew his daring, and they knew his power.

Just at a stone's throw from the palace gate, stood a building formerly a monastery, but Rogoldo not wishing to be saddled with the expense of keeping a set of hypocrites, as he termed the holy men, turned them out to seek, where e'er they could, that peace and harmony they enjoyed before his coming. This monastery was therefore the residence of his soldiery, and they were held in equal terror with their master. Their jet black armour, and their red cross shields,

shone well in battle; and when they pressed, amid the throng of foes, victory for certain was their follower.

No poor distressful object ever approached his gate, for Rogoldo's inhumanity spread wide: yet to this roof the dauntless Hugo and his associate, at dusk of eve, approached. Their dripping garments clung around their weary limbs, and panting quick with hunger and fatigue, they dared to sound the horn at the gate of St. Narvo.

They waited, and no answer was returned; the impatient Hugo seized

again the horn, and blew a blast it never knew before, the trembling sound kept dancing on the wind, and seemed to linger on the horn; quick steps were heard, and the waiting robbers heard the hoarse voice of Rogoldo.

"This must be Guido, for none but he, can blow so loud a blast."

The next instant, the opening wicket shewed, to the intruders, the giant figure of the chief, and the warden of the castle.

"Strangers," said the count, and the warden's, torch shewed the frown of disappointment, lowered upon his brow,

"Yes, my lord," said Hugo, softening the natural harshness of his voice, and bending low as he spoke, "we have presumed to stop at your gate, hearing that you would cheer a traveller in distress, and such, my lord, are we."

"Then you may return to those who sent you, and let them fulfil the hospitality they praise so much in me; nay, no lingering, begone or you shall not escape so freely."

"What," said Hugo, "will ye not grant us room to shelter our weary

bodies against this tempestuous night? Will ye not give ——."

"Nay, I will not, dastard, so begone;" he struck the Bravo in the breast, the wicket gate closed with violence against them, and they heard the savage curse them as he re-entered the castle.

Hûgo stood some time confounded; 'twas long since man had dared to treat him thus; he drew his shining dagger, from his breast, and on its glittering blade, he swore to have revenge.

"We must go," said the Bravo, to

his fellow, " but soon, aye, very soon I shall be here again."

" Methinks," said Rhodarno, " the last fierce flash that burst, shewed me the whitened sides of a cottage, suppose we hie thither, for here we are refused admittance, and 'tis impossible, much longer, to withstand this dreadful war of elements."

Hugo's eye rested on the gate, and before his assent could be given to the proposal, a dreadful catalogue of curses on Rogoldo, burst from his ready lip; then turning he took his comrade's arm, and they hastened toward the

spot where Rhodarno had observed the cottage.

Another flash ran swift along the earth, and confirmed their hopes; they soon reached it, knocked, and were admitted.

"We crave a shelter from the storm," said Hugo, entering, "and hope you will not turn us from your door."

"Nay, my friends, it never shall be said, that Edric refused to house a wandering stranger, e'en if the wind and rain did not bespeak his welcome; you are welcome, and what little com-

forts I can give shall be yours. Come, be seated, and, Myra, throw here another faggot, for we must dry the strangers' clothing. Then, addressing the wanderers, "You seem, my friends, to be of my employment; say, are you muleteers?"

"You have guess'd right, we are," replied Rhodarno, "but we have been employed upon an errand which does not suit our stomachs, I assure you."

"Aye, marry, what is it, may I be so bold?"

"Why, you must need know the Count Rogoldo."

" Know him, I have reason," replied their host; " too much have I suffered by his vassals; but what of him, my friend?"

" We were employed to carry letters from the Grand Duke's chief Recorder, touching the misfortune which has so lately happened unto this Count Rogoldo, and he (tho' you will scarce believe it) made us stay without, all dripping as we are, to wait his leisure."

" Messengers from the Grand Duke's Recorder, and yet go on foot?"

" Aye," said Hugo; " we are so bid, and our lad has reasons, for 'tis on

a business that near concerns the State, and on our secrecy hangs our lives; therefore, my friend, you will be well rewarded for your kindness: yet, should any person inquire, if such or such a one has passed this way, if you will say you know not, we shall further be your debtors."

"Certainly, it shall be as you wish, and see, your hostess has set out the table. Come, take you each a glass of wine, perhaps that may revive you."

"This was what much they wanted, for they had tasted nothing since the

morning, except an oaten cake, found in the scrip of Rhodarno.

After supper, their talkative host entertained his guests with several anecdotes of genuine worth, which, in spite of their anxious fears of safety, amused them.

"I hear," he added, "that the Count Rogoldo gives a grand tournament in honour of the birth-day of his ward, the beauteous Ruthenbella."

"Aye! 'ist so, indeed?" exclaimed Hugo, thrusting his hand into his bosom, while it fastened on his dagger's

hilt, "then, by Heavens, I shall be there, and ———"

"Ha! ha! ha! come, that's a good one;—you'll be there, among the rest of the great men!"

This reproof of Rhodarno checked the passion of Hugo, as it rose, at thought of the treatment they had received at the Castle.

"And when is this said tournament to be?" said Hugo, recovering his presence of mind, "you have heard, no doubt?"

"Aye, it has been long in the mouths of all, and, from what I learn,

the 1st of next month will be the day."

Some further converse beguiled the time until a late hour, when Rhodarno hinted he should wish to retire."

"I am happy," observed their host, that we have got a pallet where you can repose your weary limbs, and at to-morrow's dawn, whatever time you please, all things shall be in readiness for your departure."

They thanked their generous host, and retired.

"Well, this is ancient hospitality revived," said Rhodarno, as they entered the chamber; "how unlike that iron-

hearted Count that show'd his face at St. Narvo's wicket; but, by St. Agnes, you had nearly spoilt all, when our host was discoursing of the tournament."

"Aye, you did well to jog my memory; for, as the oath has passed my lips, it is engraven on the tables of my memory, and never, till I've taught him better, shall I be at rest. I have heard much of this Rogoldo's proneness—of his strength at arms; but I will shew the world, there is a man who dares resist his might, and claim that share of valour he has usurped so long."

"Come, let's to rest; in the morning we must up by times, and see if we cannot persuade our host to lend us mules to speed us on our journey, for I am heartily tired of tramping it on foot."

In the morning when they descended, the homely meal was ready for them.

"Do you proceed toward the city?" questioned the muleteer.

"No, we are charged with further dispatches to the Duke Otto; and, comrade, now we are at a distance from the city, I don't see why we should

observe our orders longer; perhaps our host can provide us with mules.

"Aye, that I can, and, with your leave, I will accompany you a short distance."

They set forward, but before they had got many paces from the cottage, Hugo observed he had left his scrip on the bench, and hastened back for it.

"I have left my satchel," he exclaimed as he entered, tho' I did not return so much for that as to thank my hostess for her noble treatment. There is some money for you—nay, I insist that you take it; and if any one should

inquire if persons of our description passed, be careful to forget you were our entertainers."

The Bravo was gone before she could thank him for his generosity, or assure him his injunction should be faithfully observed, and rejoined his companions, whom he found waiting with the mules.

Their journey continued till the close of the day; for, first, as the sun was setting, they arrived at the Valley of St. Vanh's.

"Now," said Hugo, we must bid you farewell, for as our stay at the Castle will be a week at least, and we

are total strangers to the Duke's family, we cannot ask your stay, although our inclinations prompt us strongly."

" Do not mention it, " replied the muleteer, " I must hasten onward, for I have a brother in the valley here about, a forester, with him I'll pass the night."

" How long, say you, is it to come until the tournament will be held ?"

" 'Twill be to-morrow fortnight."

" You called me friend, but now"— in answer spoke Hugo: " perhaps, if at some future period I should remind you of it, you would give me the same kind treatment I have experienced."

" You shall, at all times, be heartily welcome ; I have but little, 'tis true, but—

" But that you shared with us, and at a time when we stood so much in need of it. There is a purse for the hire of the mules, and your expences home."

" I must not take it ; you can ill spare so large a sum : you are welcome for what I have done, and men of your condition cannot pay like noblemen—so put up your purse."

" Nay, I insist on't, that you take it ; farewell, my friend ; in a fort-

night I shall again intrude upon your hospitality."

They pressed with warmth, the hand of the muleteer, then separated: the robbers made toward their well-known haunt, at which they soon arrived, and were welcomed by their comrades with unfeigned pleasure, who had begun to think they had lost their leader: the night was spent in noisy joyous merriment by the band, until the oft-filled can stole from them every sense, and sleep left them in quiet until the morning.

Rhodarno became the confidant of

Hugo, and now no project was formed, no plan projected, but his sanction was taken by the Chief.

"Rhodarno," said Hugo to him one day, "I have thought much of this tournament, and am determined to shine among the Knights of St. Narvo."

"By what title will you enter the lists?"

"That, too, has occupied my attention—you have not forgot your late master, Sir Ormond Uglis, who perished in the holy wars twelve years ago?"

"A good thought," answered Rhodarno; "and, as the new-found Sir

Ormond will be in want of an Esquire, I should feel much pleasure in filling that post."

"You delight me, Rhodarno, I feel impatient for the time, when I shall teach this proud Rogoldo the consequence of his treatment to Hugo."

"I should prefer," said his comrade, the jet-black armour that we brought from Cronoe, behind the hills of Vanho."

"And I," said Hugo, "the silver armour that accompanied it, and underneath my helmet, to cover well my countenance, our armourer shall forge

a death's head shape; my helmet, too, shall bear the like upon it, and on my shield, in the center of the cross (the banner the holy warriors bore), a death's head too shall be, and underneath it this motto—"*The inheritance of all.*"

"Excellent again," said Rhodarno, "I do not doubt but that we shall spoil their entertainment, and I must confess I have a longing for a tilt with Suido; our host at the cottage told me he was a monster in human shape—a savage; and I crave your permission

to single out and tame this untaught gentleman."

"You will have a rich opportunity," returned the Chief, "no doubt he will be Rogoldo's Esquire, and as such many occasions may be found to ——"

"Enough, I thank you for your kind advice, I shall closely follow him about, and never lack occasion to provoke him: mayhap he may not want much provocation, nor, indeed, will he, if the character our host gave him is a true one; yet, this I know, the more ready his resentment is, the more ready he will find Rhodarno, not that he has

borne me any ill, but I should wish to choose him for his master's sake."

"I have often wondered, and have been much entertained with thy odd nature; thou art a compound of serious whimsicallity; but we must get ready Rhodarno, and I advise that we should make a circuit from our home, so as to show as if our journey was from Cronoc."

"Right, then to-morrow we commence it, and through the forest of St. Floredin must be our route.

"Till then, farewell."

CHAPTER I.

" One woe doth tread upon another's heel,
So fast they follow."

HAMLET.

THE tender care of the good old Gorthmund continued toward his guest, and he was soon happy in observing a slight change in the malady that afflicted Randolph. He administered herbs, the efficacy of which he knew well from long-tried experience, for the villagers,

whose parent he was, flocked to him with their ailments, and in common found relief, and left the cell of the hermit, giving him the only payment they could tender, their prayers and blessings.

Randolph, with Gorthmund for a guide, trod the wild unfrequented path of the forest of St. Floredin, from which and the tranquillity in which they passed their day, the recovery of his patient should be dated. He awoke, as it were, from a dreadful dream, the remembrance of which, tho' awaken, seemed to fright the senses; a settled

melancholy usurped the face once blooming with the gift of rosy health —the dreadful recollection of the past, of his father, the good old Baron—his friend—his Julia, rose to his ready thought, and nearly drove his yet unstrengthened senses back to their former occupation.

Gorthmund took every pains to lull his thought to rest, and hours they spent in conversations suited to the situations of each.

"Do you observe," he one day said, "those herbs? this morning they were covered with the dew of heaven—were

blooming, gay, and lively :—now, see you, how they droop, they wither, and before the sun has run her glitt'ring course, they will have perished! Rich emblem of the life of man—we all are as those flowers, scattered promiscuously upon the face of nature, reared by the fostering hand of him who gave us being. The seasons, too, as they pursue their course, are counter parts of man, in every stage. The infant's smiling cherub face is *Spring*, who, like the long expected messenger of peace, once more arrives to crown our wishes —all nature smiles at its approach, as

doth the mother, when the babe, with outstretched arms, oft comes to claim her blessing, as if 'twere fearful that a mother's love could cease. *Summer*, with winning grace, breaks gently on us. This is the hey-day holiday of youth, the sunshine that we mortals bask in.—Oh, turn!—turn back the darkened page of life, and let me once again taste peace and harmony among the gambols of my youthful playmates —again, devoid of care and wordly ills, which crowd, and press, and drive out every thought. *Autumn*, is sober steady manhood—a time, perhaps

when life's repose is better felt than any other—when, as we trace the scene of early life, the stream of recollection brings upon its tide the remembrance of many a youthful prank, at thought of which the heart e'en then will beat with pleasure or alarm. *Winter* approaches, as does man's ingratitude, unwelcome and unbidden—a time when nature's at a stand, and all the earth's at pause whether it perish, or again it live:—just so is man; and cares and sorrows, if they keep aloof, may let him, in this stage of being, pluck from the wreath of nature one

poor blossom; but, soon as doth the rosebud's mossy head, we wither and decay. The flower is thrown unheeded by, and thought is never wasted on it more:—but what becomes of man, when life's frail burthen quits this frame, and hies away, far, far from mortal ken?"

With such discourse the mind of Randolph gradually regained its composure, and probably would have so continued, had not the Hermit requested from him a narrative of his life, and in compliance with such request, he touched too strong upon the cord that curbed

his happiness; he painted his love for Julia, and its return, in such glowing colours, that pity for his sufferings stole down the furrowed cheeks of the anxious listner; the remembrance of the galling curses of his father, again were rung by memory in his ear, the thought was too much, and he left the Hermit in haste, whose tearful eyes were raised with seeming entreaty for his return.

Some hours passed, Gorthmund repented his imprudence, and much he wished to see him once again; at length a noise of distant voices ap-

proaching his dwelling aroused him, and he hied to the cave's mouth to learn the cause. Oh! what a sight met his eye! what a spectacle for a feeling heart like his to encounter—the bleeding form of Randolph lying inanimate in the arms of some peasantry: they had found him fallen from a cliff, and thinking him dead or dying, they had hastened to the cave to see if Gorthmund could restore him.

A dreadful bruise on the head seemed the place from whence the blood flowed; the old man bathed it, and stopped its running, and having lain

the lifeless body on a couch, he thanked his friends, and they departed, yet not without leaving their hopes of the poor youth's recovery.

Life still beat faintly in its pulses, and the Hermit hoped to bring about his recovery, in the trial of which we leave him.

The birthday of the fair Ruthenbella approached, which was the time fixed by Rogoldo for the tournament; she was the daughter of Sir Ormond Uglis, and upon his leaving his country to join the Croisaders at Palestine, he be-

queathed his daughter, then an infant, to the guardianship of Rogoldo.

Ruthenbella being an only child, her possessions upon Sir Ormond's death were immense. These, independent of her personal charms tempted the avarice of Rogoldo; he sought and won her, and her birth-day was fixed for the marriage ceremony to take place.

Rhodarno, the accomplice of Hugo, was a domestic high in Sir Ormond's favour, and in consequence received an inferior officer's post amongst the vassals; he had seen Sir Ormond fall, and was appointed to convey dispatches

from the grand army into Normandy, in the road to which the band of Hugo intercepted him and carried him a prisoner to their habitation, where choice was made him, either to join the troop, or remain a captive for life: the former he accepted, and soon proved a valuable acquisition to the company. The first project of note he committed was the ransacking the palace of his former master, from whence the band carried away every article of worth, and every man put on a coat of mail, taken from the armoury, and among the rest the silve suit which Hugo proposed wearing.

A milk white charger was selected from the stud for Hugo, while a jet black one was the choice of his Esquire, and at dead of night they set forward on their journey. About the middle of the next day, the forest of St. Floredin appeared before them; they were anxious to find a resting-place, and as they paced the outskirts of the forest, a slight noise arrested their steps; they paused, they thought it might be peasantry, and made toward the place: upon their nearer approach they heard the voice of some one singing:

"Hark," said Rhodarno, "this is

the spirit of the wood, certainly, and we shall be regaled with some of his godship's wild notes."

The voice again began, and sweetly sung the following

SONG:

The winds were high upon Cardo's cliff,
And the white top't wave rose high;
Fork'd light'ning flash'd, but no relief
Came to the boatman's cry.

For dark and dreary was the hour,
And dark and drear the sky,
And rain in torrents loud did pour,
To drown their piercing cry.

Their anxious eyes rove far and near,
While tempest toss'd they go;
Their hearts beat quick, and oft a tear
Stole down a cheek of woe.

In agony, their arms entwin'd,
They sunk to rise no more,
And mountain-wave, and stormy wind,
Drove them on Cardo's shore.

The bearded witches mutely ride
The white wave in a sieve;
In silent horror on they glide,
By Edgar and his clay-cold bride,
And seem *in death to live.*

"Beautiful, by all that's good," exclaimed Rhodarno, "and yet, methinks

the melody is somewhat wild; however, this plainly speaks some dwellling must be near; suppose we proceed, for we must reach the muleteer's cottage to-night, if possible."

They still kept along the outskirts of the forest, and soon the hermit's dwelling broke to view, and thankful e'en for this, they hastened toward it.

"Father," said Rhodarno, entering, "my noble master and myself crave leave to rest a while our limbs within your cave."

"Bid your master enter," returned the Hermit—"Sir Knight, you are

welcome; rude is the entertainment I can give."

"And that we shall be very thankful for, I assure you," said Rhodarno.

He set before them some meats, the villager's had brought, and also some wine, the fruits of their vintage.

"You have a companion, I see by that hat and cloak," said Hugo to the Hermit.

"I have one, Sir Knight, a poor unhappy youth, he came one evening into my habitation;—he is, alas! a maniac."

"A maniac! then, Sir Knight,"

said Rhodarno, " 'twas him we heard singing so sweetly in the wood."

" Belike it was, for seldom is he within."

" Do you know aught of his history ?"

" He has been cross'd in love ; I find his name is Randolph."

" Randolph ?" exclaimed the robber."

" Aye : Do you know him ?"

" No, no ;—I—my name is Randolph, too, and 'tis not a common one :—Has he parents, know ye ?"

" He has no mother, and he owns

for a father one who usurps the title without fulfilling the duties."

How felt the Bravo at this discovery? —how felt the father as he brooded o'er an only son's misfortune?—he felt not at all:—how can a heart of adamant feel? He was surprised to think fate had thrown him again beside one to whom he was so near allied, and that was the occasion of his surprize at bearing the name.

At this instant the maniac entered, bearing his ragged cloak across one arm, the other within his breast; his eyes were wild; he heeded not the

strangers, but, flying to the Hermit, he drew him to a corner of the cave, and whispered something in his ear.

"What would you have, Randolph; can I do ought for you, my poor fellow?"

No! no! no!—there, see you, 'tis dead, 'tis dead!" said he, sighing mournfully, and drawing from his bosom a lifeless dove: "my poor, poor bird—my companion is gone: I found it but now, beneath the hedge, without the olive wood: look you, the breast is streaming thick with blood—the arrow has tore its little heart:—now, where's

thy mate, and where's thy little one—where is the mother to protect the child?—I had no mother, nor have they!—I'll lay it near the nest, I will not put it in the nest, or they will think that Randolph murdered it.—Come, little one—come."

He put the bird again within his breast, and left the cave, unconscsious he had been in the presence of his father.

Some conversation passed respecting the unhappy youth, and Hugo and his companion left the cave of Gortmund, from whom they received instructions

as to their journey, and at sunset arrived at the abode of Edric, the muleteer.

Hugo explained to his astonished host, his being the same with the mock messenger of the Recorder, and informed him that he had disguised himself and his Esquire in the garb of muleteers, in order to escape the observation of some secret enemies to his person.

CHAPTER XVI.

He is the messenger of death; —
He speaks of the dark and narrow house.

OSSIAN.

IN the evening the robber left the cottage, and hastened toward the castle of St. Narvo, in order to deposit his shield as one of the combatants at the ensuing tournament.

The knights were assembled to par-

take of the festival of the Count, and were seated at a table, at which the lady Ruthenbella and the donor presided, the aged minstrels tuned their harps to many a lively air, and mirth and good cheer seemed partners in the joy.

Words full of tenderness dropped from the lips of Rogoldo to the attentive ear of his intended bride, whose health and every earthly happiness was proposed by Sir Oberon, of Andula, loud plaudits followed the proposition, and it was scarcely finished e'er the warden's horn thrice sounded shrill; the company rose in expectation of some

stranger's arrival, when Rhodarno entered, his helmet in his hand, his face was nearly covered with the long black hair, which strayed from his head o'er his forehead; he bent his body to the guests, who still kept standing to hear his message; he spoke:—

"To you, the lord Rogoldo, and you my lords, his visitors, my master sends, by me, his faithful squire, his compliments, and to bear to you his wishes, he intends, with the Count's permission, to add one to the many nobles who shall grace to-morrow's tournament;

and now he waits, without the hall, to know the result of this my embassy."

"We would know your master's name good sir," said the Count.

"The lord of Cronoc castle, Sir Ormond Uglis," returned Rhodarno, bowing, and was retiring, but the exclamation which burst from the lips of all, arrested him.

"Sir Ormond Uglis," retorted Rogoldo, "thou art a liar, the lord of Cronoc perished long ago, and Palestine has found him grave room."

"A liar," returned the undaunted Bravo, "can it be Count Rogoldo

sends such court unto Sir Ormond, as that his esquire would falsely bear a message he received? my lord, he'll scarcely credit me when I repeat these words to him: but, lo! see where he comes———."

He entered cased in the silver armour of Sir Ormond; his massy shield was hanging on his left arm, his right hand he placed upon his breast, and bowed to all the company, save the Count, who tremblingly sat viewing the supposed spirit of the baron; a scarf of white sattin (worked by the fair hand of the lady Ruthenbella, and

which was given her father on a birth-day before his departure) was thrown across his shoulder, on his silver helmet a golden lion, rampant, appeared holding, in his paws, the blood-red banner of the Knights of the Cross, and his three white feathers waved about, in unison with his graceful step.

In a moment the lady Ruthenbella was at the feet of her supposed parent, and the words "father, oh! my father," had scarce burst from her lips, e'er she fainted, he took her in his arms, and pressing her to his breast, seemed to hang in transport o'er his lovely

daughter; then starting, he gave her in charge to the domestics, and passed the crowd to the upper end of the banquet board, where stood the Count, the eyes of all followed him, yet none dared to speak; he seized Rogoldo's wrist, and drawing from his hand the embroidered gauntlet he wore, he gave it to his esquire, and taking one from his own hand, he threw it before his opponent.

Rogoldo knew well his pointed meaning, and he trembled yet the more as he eyed the sturdy form of his challenger, who motioned to

Rhodarno to speak; he bowing low, obeyed.

"Sir Ormond Uglis challenges you, Count Rogoldo, to meet him at the tournament to-morrow; as you have received his gauntlet, you have accepted his offer, and now he only waits to know your weapon."

'Hugo nodded his head in approbation.

The Count for sometime replied not, equally afraid to refuse or to give his assent, but he determined not to meet Sir Ormond, for such he now

supposed him, therefore addressing himself to Hugo, he began.

"Sir Knight I do decline your challenge; yet, mark me, not from any motive of fear, but from the situation I at present stand in regard to your fair daughter, to-morrow she will be mine; you thought me once your friend, what can have changed the opinion you heretofore had of my honour, you confided your daughter to my care, and I appeal to the surrounding noblemen, yea, even to her own fairself if prudence does not prompt me when I refuse to lift my

hand against the life of one who will so soon become my parent."

"Coward," burst from the lips of Hugo. Rogoldo was not proof against this; he eagerly stooped, and snatching the gautlet from the ground, he exclaimed—

"This is too much: Sir Knight, I meet you, the spear and small sword shall be my weapons, and you'll repent too late the anger you have raised in Count Rogoldo."

Hugo was retiring, but the Herald called him back.

"Sir Knight, 'tis customary e'er you

depart, to drink the health and happiness of him who is the donor of the feast."

He returned, and taking the offered cup, put up his vizier to rear it to his lips; at this instant, the death's head front was seen by all, and Rogoldo, panting quick with fright, sunk nearly senseless in his seat.

"*Our speedy meeting, Count Rogoldo,*" the bravo gave, and put the cup to his deadly lips, and again returned it; then turning, he passed the crowd, and coming to the spot where the domestics held the still senseless

Ruthenbella, he undone his scarf, and fastening it to her arm, he left the hall, followed by Rhodarno.

For some moments terror kept them mute, until Sir Oberon stepped forward to examine the shield; with horror he viewed the death's head shape, and read aloud the inscription, "*The Inheritance of all.*" Rogoldo caught the sound, and sunk back upon his couch inanimate: the minstrelsy had ceased upon the entrance of Hugo, and confusion and terror usurped the former place of mirth.

The first object that met the eye of Ruthenbella, was the milk white scarf.

"Oh! then," she cried, frantically seizing and kissing it, "I did not dream it was my long-lost father that I beheld; lead me to him. Oh! why is this confusion? speak, my Rogoldo; speak; why do you shrink from me, and why so pale?—release me from this dread suspence."

Rogoldo could not answer.

"Be composed, fair lady, all is safe," said a knight.

"Then lead me to my father:—yet why is the Count so deadly pale; or why does he shun his Ruthenbella?—speak, Sir Oberon, speak, my brain's on fire—my father!"

"You have not seen him, lady," said Oberon; "you have been unwell, and 'tis but phantazy."

"Have *not* seen him! oh! I have seen him, just in the armour he wore when he left his Ruthenbella, and this scarf,—oh! Heavens,—his wretched daughter's gift.—Oh! my parent: Rogoldo, my parent!"

She relapsed again, and her domestics bore her to her chamber.

CHAPTER XVII.

THE morn rose bright that ushered in the day that long had fed the imagination of the many knights at St. Narvo; with delight the cloud that darkened last night's scene vanished with the light of morn, and each one prepared for the fête.

Not so Rogoldo: he passed a sleepless night, and early in the morn had sent for Guido, his long-tried friend

and confidant, who, having entered, he thus addressed:

"Guido, no doubt you have heard of last night's tumult, and its cause."

"I have," he replied.

"You know, too, I am to meet Sir Ormond in the fight, and, on my life, I know not what to think, for surely Sir Montfort saw him fall, and likewise saw his funeral rite performed."

"'Tis even so," said Guido, "and many more beside saw him buried."

"Then, this is an impostor, or his spirit, and in the dread uncertainty, I know not what to do: what would you

advise? what plan do you propose?—speak, and I'll adopt it."

"I would, surely," said Guido, "if it should meet your will, that I should disguise myself in your armour, and meet this dread champion."

"Will you, my brave fellow? that is right, this purse, this jewel, and this, too, are your's, for much I dread to lift my hand against the father of my Ruthenbella."

Guido left him to acquit himself, and arrived in the ring just as the tilting commenced; shouts of approbation came upon all around as he entered;

the ladies waved their 'kerchiefs in the air, and nothing, save the presence of Ruthenbella, seemed wanting to complete their joy.

Guido, whose manly arm outbraved the skill of all the knights assembled, rode up and down the course in all the pride and dignity the borrowed plumes of his master could give him.

The Lady of Sir Oberon was appointed by the assembly to present the prize to the victor, and Guido, impatient to receive it, hastened toward the throne, on which the Lady sat, one knee was bent to the earth, she had out-

stretch her hand to present it, when the Herald's trumpet sounded at the approach of some other opponent; it was the Bravo, who entered on his foaming steed; soon he was ready for the charge, the trumpet sounded, the spears were couched, and at the first onset, the furious Guido was unhorsed: a while he lay upon the ground; then starting up, he drew his small-sword and defied his opponent to dismount; Hugo vaulted from off his horse, and before he could have time to draw his rapier, Guido flew to him, and, with a single stroke clove in two the helmet,

which split and tumbled useless to the earth: the spectators, at this, were much displeased, and, by their speech, blamed the false Rogoldo; but Hugo, drawing his sword, by his superior skill, quickly disarmed him; then catching him in his arms, he threw him with violence to the earth.

Wonder and surprize at such uncommon strength and prowess, broke out in acclamations of applause from all around; then Hugo, stooping, thus addressed him:

"You may remember, some few days ago, two travellers, weary with fatigue

and pain, craved lodging at the Castle of St. Narvo, and, though their garments were dripping with rain, and thunder rolled with awful violence around them, you, like an uncourtly knight, refused them admittance, and when again they urged, bid them begone; one of them, thy equal, aye, thy superior in rank, cursed thee, and vowed to have revenge; 'tis him that now takes it, and you forfeit your life for your indignity to Hugo."

"Hugo," murmured the wretch, as he drew his bleeding body further from

him, "art thou, indeed, Hugo the Robber?"

The Bravo made him no answer, but ungirting his breastplate, bared his bosom, and shewed the blood-stained dagger, the mark of his order.

"And now, thou lion-heart, farewell;" added Hugo,—"thou wilt learn, from this strict teaching, how you should use the dignity you hold; and, if you have a heart (though much I question it), sometimes let it be called to action, and not to slumber in a breast, as if 'twere useless. You see, I moralize although a robber; you were

for ever among my worst enemies although I never injured you, but the restless spirit you possess, made you join in the general cry; I have now sufficient revenge—my sword has been my spokesman."

Having thus spoke, he mounted his steed, and, followed by his Esquire, left the ring in haste. The bleeding body of the supposed Count was conveyed to the Castle, and, when the strength of Guido would permit him, he inform- Rogoldo of the cheat that had been put put upon them all.

In vain were messengers dispatched

to trace the footsteps of the Robber; he had outshot the hind in swiftness, and, e'er the close of day, had reached again his well-known haunt.

The muleteers hut among the rest in the domain was searched, and he learnt with astonishment and terror, the name of the guest whose liberallity he had so bountifully witnessed, and at whose name he had so often trembled.

CHAPTER XVIII.

"The slave of fate,
Can man his fate controul?"

HUGO having returned to his den determined to put his long thought plan in execution, and early one morning quitted the subterraneous abode, disguised, in order to take a view of the fabric, where he soon intended desolation and blood to reign

triumphant, long did he traverse the outskirts of the underwood, which grew in thick bushes a short distance from the castle, till at length he determined to enter the great hall of the castle; a domestic welcomed the viper, who represented himself as a peasant, who was hastening toward the capitol; and had a grievance to complain of to the prince; after partaking of the refreshment they had set before him, he arose to depart, but struck with curiosity at the sight of his own name, which in large letters was fastened to a

white banner, with the mark of their order on it.

"How came that banner in your possession," demanded the outlaw.

"Which ?" returned an old domestic,

"That banner with the blood-red dagger on it."

"That," he returned, tightening the belt around his body, and lifting himself upon his toes, "that, why I helped to take it from the outlaw Hugo: oh, a glorious day it was too, many of our fellows lost their lives, but many

a worthless robber lay gasping by their side."

"You were in that conflict were you?" questioned Hugo.

"Aye, and though I am an old man, let me tell you, I was not least in the fight, 'twas I that tore it from the outlaw's grasp, 'twas I that ——, oh, that he was here now—oh if the robber Hugo was but here, how I ——."

"What *wouldst* thou grey-beard," said he, "what *couldst* thou do? thou tare it from the grasp of Hugo? thou wish to see him? know then, reptile,

thou dost see him; and here he claims, from Otho and from thee, his banner: move, and your next motion will be in the agonies of death."

He seized the banner; the trembling domestics stood amazed and confounded; in vain the archers shot their darts, in vain was the javelin hurled; Hugo had outstripped the messengers of death, and entered again the mazes of the underwood, and regained his den, where as he recounted the exaggerated tale to his comrades, the vaults echoed with the joyous sounds of their approbation.

Hugo wanted not courage, he was a savage, a barbarian, and in the thought of injuring the world, which his vices had forbid him to inhabit, and which his depredations had driven him from, he gloried. He commanded the lieutenant to form the troop, while he addressed them as follows:—

"My brave comrades, partners in my pains, my miseries, but equal partners in my bliss, will you not stretch out your arm to avenge the death of so many of your brave comrades? will you not unsheath your

rapiers in the sweet cause of revenge? I see you will, your looks speak for you; and victory is wrote in every sparkling eye: when shall I lead you to the foe, shall it be to night? will you then enrich your coffers with the splendid gold of your enemy? speak, the life of your chief is in your hands, 'tis yours, use it as you will, but let it be in vengeance on the hated Otho."

Plaudits, long and loud, burst from the thundering throats of the outlaws, as they stood in divisions around their leader; he bowed, a smile played on

his cheek as they continued; he ceased, they seated themselves to consider the most effectual means of effecting their purpose; it was at length agreed that Rhodarno should attack the private postern, with a select party; while Hugo should engage their attention with a mock attack on the principal gate: each panted eager for the hour of twelve; already had they, in idea, possession of the immense wealth of Otho; already did each one count the portion allotted to himself, heedless of the price at which it was to be obtained.

Hugo thought it was best that one of them should go disguised to the castle, in order to aid the entrance of the troop; when the daring Ruffo stood forward, as a volunteer in the dangerous enterprise; Hugo flew to, and embraced him.

"Brave Ruffo," said he, "thou, of all others hast shewn thyself in former instances, but now thou art dearer to me and to the rest of thy comrades by this voluntary act of thine; thou shalt go, disguise thyself as a monk of the order of Saint Francis; and when the sun is sinking towards his rest, thou,

with thy staff, shall sally forth a weary pilgrim, and crave a lodging for the night; then when thou hears three arrows shot and strike the postern gate, hasten thou to let thy comrades in, and let their daggers speak the thanks for thy entertainment."

"It shall be so," said Ruffo; "now comrades to rest, and in the after part of this day's course, rise up again refreshed, and ready to aid your brother, while yet the remembrance of the deed is warm, though that I need not fear, revenge is written in characters too strong, on your memory, to be easily

effaced: good day, and depend on the vigilance of Ruffo."

Pierre had been a silent observer of the whole, his heart melted, he determined, for once, to exert his power to save the lives of so many that must fall in the carnage; and in the evening, as all the troop were still sleeping on their benches, he equipped Ruffo, in the disguise Hugo had chosen for him, and saw him to the cave's mouth, then wished him success and farewell, having first attached these lines to the back of his garment.

" A villain is concealed beneath this

sacred garb, they call him Ruffo, he is the chosen friend of Hugo, the outlaw, who attacks the castle, at the private postern, at 12 this night."

CHAPTER XIX.

Shall worth lie hid in sorrow's baleful shade,
And no reward shall suff'ring virtue find;
While vice, triumphant, lifts her pamper'd head,
Nor hears the step of vengeance close behind.

SCOTT.

OTHO, Duke of Vanho, was reputed the richest nobleman in all the province, he was nearly allied to the Grand Duke, and then held the reigns of goverment in his strong hand. His

castle was free to the weary and benighted traveller, but caution governed all his measures, since the attack made by the band of Hugo, and the Bravo's late daring outrage. The guards were doubled, and every precaution taken to stop the bandit's advances.

On the evening preceeding the attack, the disguised robber stopped at the wicket; thrice did he knock, and long did he wait, before any one appeared to greet his welcome, at last a voice from the tower, demanded his business, which being satisfied, a bel

rang violently, and the wicket was opened by a domestic, whose splendid attire fully denoted the pomp of his lord.

The servant bid him welcome to Vanho, and desired him to follow.

Two passages, near the entrance of the gate, attracted his attention, and a while he stopped to examine them; the domestic missed him, and returned.

"What is the meaning of thy stopping, holy father?" demanded he.

"I paused, my son, but to look upon that tinsel'd shrine, of the saint

what, dost thou think our holy mother was thus accoutred? dost thou suppose her heavenly limbs were clad in any other than the coarsest raiment? oh shameful mockery."

"Beware, father, what thou sayest, or thou wilt have to pass the night upon the barren moor, without the castle. The prince is good, and respects thy order: beneath his roof thou wilt be entertained, as becometh a person in thy forlorn state; but beware how your mouth speaks aught against the splendour around you,

for 'tis in that our royal masters delights."

Aye, thought Ruffo, 'tis in that I delight, and soon these walls will own no other lord than Hugo, whose second in fortune will be Ruffo.

They reached the hall, profusion reigned around; they invited him to the repast, he railed against the luxurys, under which the tables groaned, and yet partook of their contents; he censured the servants for tasting the wine, which was never from his own lips.

While thus Ruffo indulged in the

luxury of the moment, the absent Hugo, and the purpose of his mission, were entirely forgot.

A messenger arrived to say, the duke, hearing a father of the order of Saint Francis was under his roof, he wished to converse with the holy man.

They led him through apartments which fully spoke the riches of their owner.

The robber entered the saloon, with a face that told the sanctity of his assumed office; his arms were crossed

upon his breast, and his eye steadily bent upon the ground.

The voice of the prince aroused him.

"Well, holy father, whence come you?"

"From a far distant country, from Aleppo. I have come a weary pilgrim; now returning to my monastery, to pass my future days, in peace, with my maker: my sins are many."

"Aye," groaned the Duke.

"But now, thank heaven, by penance and prayer, the holy mother ——."

"Thou pray," said the duke, unable to contain his rage, "thou reptile, how darest thou lift thy guilty eye to heaven; art thou not afraid each moment of thy existence will be thy last? dost thou not start at every falling leaf? dost thou not pant when winds whistle hollowly around thee? does not thy active fancy figure to thee the officers of justice, in the faces of each of my domestics: seize him—seize on the hypocrite; 'tis Ruffo, the chosen friend of Hugo: his crimes are many, and they cry aloud: but first be sure, strip off the sacred habit from his

body, unbare his bosom, and satisfy yourselves."

"His orders were executed nearly as soon as given: the mark of the order was found upon his breast: again the prince spoke :—

"As thou was the friend of the leader, thou shalt e'en be so in death; one rack shall hold you both, one rack shall witness the agonies of each; then you will think of the miseries which, heretofore, have passed your eyes, without stretching forth an arm to save a fellow mortal. Away with him, let the dungeon in the south tower be his

couch; to-morrow's dawn shall bring him death."

The duke then gave directions for the defence, against the attack, which the paper, fastened on the back of Ruffo, informed him would be made; he ordered the drawbridge, within the private postern, to be unhinged, and only supported by a chain within side; while the chief part of the soldiery and vassals were stationed at the principal gate; and the upper parts, about the gate, were lined with archers and spearsmen: all was in readiness, and waited, with anxiety, the awful hour

when the slaughter was to commence. The clock heavily tolled the hour of twelve. Three arrows were shot against the postern gate; one of the soldiers, of the duke, who had been previously placed there, in the mantle of Ruffo, opened the wicket.

Rhodarno saluted him.

"Brave Ruffo, thou art a gallant fellow, what is that before us, a draw-bridge, do we cross it?"

The soldier answered, "yes," in a whisper; and the gang, with their leader, mounted the drawbridge. No sooner was the last foot trod upon the

platform, than it gave way, and the whole were plunged into the gulph below: no groan was heard, the shock was too sudden.

In the meanwhile the slaughter among the fellows, headed by Hugo, was immense, without their being able to discover from whence the destruction on them was hurl'd: numbers received the barb of death, many lay groaning on the blood-stained earth, and each was trampled on by his comrade. Meanwhile, Hugo flew from post to post, rallying the Bravos, who were preparing to fly—an arrow struck his

throat—a crimson gore flowed from the wound, and he sunk into the arms of one of the banditti. At this instant, the straggling remains of the band were attacked on each side, by a party from the private postern—they fought like furies, but they fought in vain—their leader gone, they did but confuse themselves; and the remaining few flung down their arms, and begged for mercy.

A defeat was sounded, which was answered from the castle, and as the party conveyed in the miscreants, the sounds of victory burst forth from each

mouth in the castle, the remainder of the band were ironed and confined 'till orders could arrive from the Grand Duke respecting the disposal of them. In the morning the black flag waved on the turret top, underneath which was hoisted the banner of the Order of Saint Maldo, and the head of Hugo, ghastly e'en in death, was fixed upon a pole, on the principal gate of the castle.

Twelve of the Bravos were condemned to death, with Ruffo, and as you pass the castle, their gibbets are

now to be seen, and the story of Hugo and his defeat, is rehearsed to you by the peasantry of Vanho.

CHAPTER XX.

"—— Here I love to hide me and relieve
"My sad, sad musings with a song."

It was soon current, in the capital, that the maniac occupied the cave of the Hermit Gorthmund, and thither Gortz hastened to endeavour to recal the forlorn Randolph:—he entered the cave—the Hermit was deep in conver-

sation with his guest, who seemed to listen with great attention: as soon as he saw Gortz, he started up, and taking his hand he fixed his sunken eye upon his face and remained for some time examining his countenance.

"Randolph, hast thou forgotten me?" at length Gortz inquired.

"Who art thou?"

"You will soon remember me? come, let us walk in the forest, let us talk of Henry, of Julia."

"Art thou the father of Julia?—Come old man, let me lead you to a spot, where oft I sit and sigh to sense-

less winds, that, with unheeded fury, hurry on, and will not bear my heartfelt sighs to Julia—why dost thou hesitate? art thou afraid?—Come, come, I will not harm thee!"

He linked his tatter'd arm within the arm of Gortz, and led him to the outskirts of the forest.

"There," said he, "dost thou see that ivy-covered trunk—dost thou observe how the weaker clings around the strong, as if 'twere fearful we should harm it."

"Well, poor youth—what then?"

"What then!" exclaimed the ma-

niac, starting—"had'st thou a daughter ever?—did she love?—did her heart twine round her lover's as the ivy doth about this rough-trunked oak?—did *you* tear them asunder, because its outer bark was not so smooth as its fellow shrubs; or did you part two fondest lovers, because the youth's lowly station ill accorded with your ideas of happiness, unmindful of the many noble qualities that lurked within his honest dusky bosom?"

"Poor youth!—I never had a daughter."

"Thou art a liar—a very knave:—

old men are all liars, and thou art one—thou thinks to hide her from me, dost thou ?" he exclaimed, in frenzy; then seizing his arm, he added, in lower tones, "thou would'st not take her to thy heart, for 'twould be a pity to hide so fair a form within so black an habitation."

For some time he was silent, but at length, pointing to a tree near them, he again took the hand of Gortz, and said:

"There was a ring-dove built its nest in the rude hollow of yon tall sycamore—long I fed it, for it knew me well—oft have listened as it told its softening tale to its mate; I called it Julia, and its

mate Randolph; and when I've seen them bill and coo, and coo and bill, oh! how I've laughed, and drove them far apart, and how their wings have beat and fluttered. Once when the mate was absent from its love, a wild destroying hawk, on wavering wing, hung o'er their nest.—The dove, as if it knew its safety, sought shelter in my cave; in the meanwhile the mate returned, and finding Julia, as I call her, gone, how the poor bird did mourn, and sigh; oh! I shall never forget, when I put her in the nest, what

thanks shot from the softening eye of the dove."

"I thought of my Julia—*mine!* oh, no—no! the hawk hath, with its talons, torn her lilly-breast, and now, methinks, she's dead.—Here, I'll show thee her grave—there's wild flowers grows around, yet none grows on it—they all wither and die as soon as I plant them, and I have no tears to water them."

"Dear distressed youth, what can I do for you?—Randolph, speak—think—."

"What! dost thou weep, old man? —oh! forshame—forshame——."

"'Tis for you I weep, poor youth."

"For me?—ha! ha! ha!—thou had'st more need weep for thyself—I cannot weep—the source from whence a tear would flow, has long been dried up in me—methinks, 'twould better me if I could weep—but, hark, I tell thee—let me whisper—go, seek my cave; its mouth is covered near with cyprus; see, there, along yon green bank-side, it stands, and at the top of it is a cross: first bend thy knee to it—then fly and hide thy guilty face in the dark recesses of the cave—why, thy tears flow faster do not weep, old man—come, do not;

—a tear will only dim thine eye, it will not wash away the remembrance of cruelties—Julia wept too;—oh! it cut me to the heart to see the pearly tear of pity glisten in her eye, and dim its lustre."

Then, pitifully looking at his companion, he softly sung:

"But, ah! me—
"Where shall I see
"My true love, Emma fair?
"Ah! well-a-day,
"She's gone away,
"And left me to despair.

"If thou wouldst wish to find my love,
"My heart is open ——— bare,
"Search every vital, as they move,
"For thou wilt find her there."

"Four lingering months hast thou passed in this dreary waste," said Gortz.

"The maniac observed him not, but continued.

"Bleak blew the wind,
"Rough heav'd the billow,
"Swift flew the hind.
"From Randolph's willow.

"Oh, my willow, did I never shew thee my willow; come to the brook, 'tis close by, come I've cut Julia's

name on't, but I must forget her, for e'en the envious moss would fain close up the letters, which every day I deeper cut, and deeper are they engraven on my heart."

He seated himself under the willow, and kissed the name; then starting, he viewed Gortz as an intruder, and exclaimed:—

"Go, get thee gone, I want thee now no more; go to thy daughter, tell her how I have rated thee, and when she sees thee struggling with the pangs of thy guilty conscience, she will laugh at thee, as I do—go—begone I say."

He rushed from the sorrowing Gortz, who retraced his steps across the forest, and reached the inn, on the borders of it, where he stopped for the night: in the morning, again he visited the hermit's cave, and was informed that Randolph had not been there the whole night; and Gortz, attended by the hermit, slowly walked up the craggy steep, near the dwelling: they wandered for some time, at length they discovered the body of the hapless youth, lying across a jutting angle of the rock.

"Ah, poor youth, 'tis he—'tis he,"

exclaimed, the tender-hearted, Gortz, and immediately descended the slanting side, and, after many attempts, succeeded in bringing it to the top.

His body was burried under the willow, his name was cut by Gortz, under that of Julia: many a tear fell from the eyes of him and the hermit, to their memory; no stone marks the spot, but the peasantry, to this day, visit the grave, and tell to the passing stranger the sad fate of RANDOLPH, THE BRAVO'S SON.

FINIS.

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